



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

MONTANA WOLF PROGRAM WEEKLY REPORT

To: Interested Parties

From: MFWP Wolf Program Coordinator, Carolyn Sime

Subject: Wolf Program Activities and Related Information, April 18 - 24, 2009

Contributors to the Montana Wolf Weekly are Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP), Universities, USDA Wildlife Services (WS), the National Park Service (NPS; Glacier NP; Yellowstone National Park will be reported in the Wyoming Wolf Weekly), US Forest Service, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and the Blackfeet Nation.

Highlighted activities relate to: monitoring, wolf – livestock interactions, outreach and education, research, law enforcement, and other miscellaneous topics of public interest. The Weekly Report will be available on each Monday, covering the previous week. It and other wolf program information (including the 2008 annual report) can be found at: <http://fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/wolf/default.html>.

Wolf Monitoring Activities

FWP encourages hunters, landowners, and other outdoor enthusiasts to report wolves through the online reporting button or to send in one of the pre-printed postcards available at all FWP offices, many US Forest Service offices, and license providers throughout the state. Information provided by the public helps FWP more accurately monitor wolf numbers and distribution in Montana.

Flights: None.

Wolf - Livestock Activities

On 4/18, homeowners on the edge of Missoula's South Hills neighborhoods reported that their small dog was killed by wolves. Wolves had been reported near the area in previous weeks, but field work in the area by FWP did not confirm wolf activity. The owners of the small dog buried it, but offered to retrieve it so that the cause of death could be determined for sure. WS completed the investigation and determined that the dog was killed by a coyote.

On 4/20, WS confirmed a calf was injured by wolves on private land in the Ninemile Valley west of Missoula. The calf is being doctored and will likely live. Another calf was reported as missing and WS determined it was a probable loss. FWP is exploring options with the livestock producer to try to help prevent further incidents.

On 4/21, WS removed 5 wolves from the Livermore pack on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in coordination with Blackfeet Wildlife Program personnel.

Outreach and Education Activities

Nothing to report.

Research Activities

Nothing to Report.

Law Enforcement and Related Activities

On the 18th, a private landowner shot and killed a wolf after witnessing the wolf chasing cattle on his private property in the East Fork of the Bitterroot. The individual reported the incident and FWP law enforcement investigated, in consultation with USFWS law enforcement. Law enforcement determined that it was within the parameters established by the 10j federal regulations that apply to the experimental area across southern Montana.

Other

NEW -- Delisting Update:

The Final Rule to Establish a Gray Wolf – Northern Rocky Mountain Distinct Population Segment and Remove it from the Federal List of Threatened and Endangered Species becomes effective May 4, 2009. It was published in the *Federal Register* Vol 74, No. 62 pages 15123-15188 on April 2, 2009. The rule, the literature cited, and Questions and Answers about it are posted on the USFWS website at <http://westerngraywolf.fws.gov>.

The rule delists wolves in Montana, Idaho, eastern one-third of Washington and Oregon, and a small part of northcentral Utah. Wolves in Wyoming will remain under the adequate regulatory mechanisms of the ESA. The US Fish and Wildlife Service will continue to manage wolves in all of Wyoming under the provisions of the 1994 nonessential experimental population rules. Management under the ESA will continue until such time Wyoming develops a regulatory framework that USFWS Service determines meets the purposes of the ESA. After that happens the Service may initiate the mandatory federal regulatory process [including public review and comment] to turn management over to Wyoming.

Many environmental groups have already stated their intent to challenge the federal decision in court, by sending the required “60-day Notice of Intent to Sue” letter to Interior Secretary Salazar.

On May 4, Montana’s state laws and the FWP Commission rules and regulations take effect. See the FWP wolf web page for a Fact Sheet and answers to frequently asked questions: <http://fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/wolf/default.html>. Check back often for updates and new information.

Current Management in Montana until Delisting Takes Effect:

FWP, through an interagency cooperative agreement, is still the lead agency for all wolf conservation and management (within the bounds of federal regulations) so long as adequate federal funding continues to be made available. FWP will continue to monitor wolves, do public outreach, and guide and direct research activities. No public hunting or trapping is allowed. USDA Wildlife Services is still the agency to investigate causes of injured or dead livestock and carry out FWP’s decisions to address conflicts, as guided by federal regulations. Montana will continue to stay involved in litigation and any future delisting developments and will continue to seek the most efficient, successful path to delisting. FWP will also continue its

collaborative work with Montana Tribes, other state and federal agencies, and the Montana Livestock Loss Reduction and Mitigation Program.

Check the wolf pages on the FWP website for important information and updates:

<http://fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/wolf/default.html>.

Montana Livestock Loss Reduction & Mitigation Board:

The Montana Senate has confirmed the appointments of two new Board members (Michael Leahy and John Herman) and the reappointment of three Board members (Brad Radtke, Jim Cross, and Whitney Wankel). The terms of Elaine Allestad and Larry Trexler continue. The Board will meet May 11, 2009 in the Livestock Conference Room 319, Scott Hart Building. The meeting agenda is still being developed. When finalized, it and the start time will be announced.

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To learn more about Montana's wolf population, the Montana program and to help FWP monitor wolves by reporting wolf sign, visit FWP at: www.fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/wolf.

To anonymously report a dead or injured wolf or suspected illegal activity, call: 1-800-TIP-MONT.

To request an investigation of injured or dead livestock, call USDA Wildlife Services directly in western Montana / Helena area at 458-0106 or in eastern Montana / Columbus area at: 657-6464 Or call your nearest FWP representative to have your call referred to Wildlife Services.

If you have a confirmed or probable livestock loss due to wolves, USDA Wildlife Services will supply you with a copy of the Loss Reimbursement Application form. For more information, see <http://liv.mt.gov/liv/LM/index.asp>. Or, contact the Livestock Loss Reduction and Mitigation Program Coordinator George Edwards at the Montana Department of Livestock at 444-5609.